

Opinion: Feds exploit fire tragedy to promote logging

By Chad Hanson, Sierra

In the wake of the October 2017 fires in Northern California, which resulted in the loss of so many lives and homes, people affected by the tragedy are grieving and bewildered. Many people are searching for answers about what caused the fires, and a way forward to prevent similar loss of life and property.

It's frustrating, then, to watch Republican leaders in Congress and the Trump administration politicizing the recent tragedy as they push for a sweeping elimination of environmental laws on our national forests and other federal public lands to increase logging and backcountry fire suppression under the guise of community protection. On Nov. 1, the House voted 232-188 to allow for more "salvage logging" and other forms of tree-cutting on federal properties. According to the Associated Press, House Speaker Paul Ryan said the bill was needed to protect the nation's federal forests "from the kind of devastation that California experienced."

Wrong. Even a cursory examination of the science of forest ecology reveals that this plan would not only destroy vast acreages of public forests, but would also put communities at even greater risk.

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